

Improved Transformer Thermal Models

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Abstract: In this paper, on basis of heat transfer mechanism, some models of transformer thermal and loss of life will be studied. Thermal mechanisms are complex by their own and even more when applied to a complex system, either geometrically either physically, such as the transformer is. However, the required transformer thermal model must be as simple as possible without losing representative ness of major phenomena involved; a compromise must then be achieved between accuracy and complexity. Based on the thermal model adopted by International Standards, small improvements to increase model accuracy are presented and a comparative study of resulted accuracy under different load and ambient temperature profiles is performed.

Key-Words: Loss of life models, Thermal parameters, Transformer thermal.

1 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the different thermal models proposed in specialised bibliography for oil-immersed distribution transformers as well as their application domain. The usefulness of thermal model is to estimate the highest temperature transformer experiences during its functioning (the hot spot), so that relative ageing rate can be evaluated [2], [3]. Thermal mechanisms are complex by their own and even more when applied to a complex system, either geometrically either physically, such as the transformer is. However, the required transformer thermal model must be as simple as possible without losing representative mess of major phenomena involved; a compromise must then be achieved between accuracy and complexity. For this reason, thermal mechanisms will be simplified, as well as the transformer thermal system itself. Given a few transformer specific parameters, the hot-spot temperature will be estimated as a function of the driving load and ambient temperature. In this paper a brief introduction to transformer involved heat transfer mechanisms is performed, a first simplified thermal model is given and International Standards proposed model as well as respective parameters are presented. Possible model improvements are derived: the correction of transformer losses due to temperature variation, the convective heat transfer variation with temperature, the existence of a secondary thermal time constant associated to transformer windings and

the influence of variable ambient temperature into transformer dynamic thermal system [26], [27].

2 Thermal Model

The heating of a transformer arises from electric and magnetic losses. One can consider the existence of two main active heat sources: the windings and the magnetic core usually referred as windings losses and core functioning losses. Secondary heat losses, in the tank and other metallic parts of the transformer, due to Eddy currents, will be neglected, due to their small proportions. Thermal laws determine that once a thermal gradient is establish, thermal fluxes flow from higher temperature parts to lower ones, until the thermal equilibrium is reached. This heat transition between higher and lower temperature parts can be achieved either by conduction, convection and radiation. Each of these heat transfer mechanisms is dependent upon the materials specific characteristics (thermal capacity, conductivity convection and radiation coefficients), materials anisotropy or isotropy, geometric parameters; some of these characteristics are it self, temperature dependent. The establishment of temperature distribution inside a transformer is very complex and thus, some simplifications must be admitted. Heat transfer from heat sources to cooling medium can be divided into four paths [22], [24]:

i) from inner parts of the active components (windings and core) to their external surface in contact with oil; here the heat transfer mechanism is

mainly due to conductivity;

ii) from external surfaces of active parts, to oil; here the heat transfer mechanism is mainly due to oil convection;

iii) from oil to external tank surfaces; neglecting the tank width (where heat transfer is due to conductivity) one can assume that oil convection is the main mechanism of heat transfer;

iv) from external tank surfaces to external cooling medium (air); here, heat is dissipated by air convection and radiation.

2.1 Heat Transfer Mechanisms

Although a transformer is composed of many different parts, its thermal analysis can be started considering the heating general theory of a homogeneous solid body. Heating sources inside a transformer are the windings and the core; both components can be considered solid black bodies, where conduction is the only mechanism of heat flow [17]. The temperature Θ of an opaque body inside which power losses P_{loss} are generated, is a function of time, t , and spatial references according to [10]:

$$V \left[c_v \frac{\partial \Theta}{\partial t} - \text{div}(\lambda_{th} \overline{\text{grad} \Theta}) \right] = P_{loss}, \quad (1)$$

where: V - volume [m^3], c_v - thermal capacity per unit volume, at constant pressure [$\text{J m}^{-3} \text{K}^{-1}$], λ_{th} - thermal conductivity [$\text{Wm}^{-1}\text{K}^{-1}$] and P_{loss} -power loss [W].

If temperature variations of reduced magnitude are considered, thermal conductivity λ_{th} which, generally, is temperature dependent, can be assumed constant. Therefore, for an anisotropic body presenting different thermal conductivity λ_{thi} for the three main axes x , y and z , equation (1) is given by the Fourier Law [17]:

$$V \left[c_v \frac{\partial \Theta}{\partial t} - \left(\lambda_{thx} \frac{\partial^2 \Theta}{\partial x^2} + \lambda_{thy} \frac{\partial^2 \Theta}{\partial y^2} + \lambda_{thz} \frac{\partial^2 \Theta}{\partial z^2} \right) \right] = P_{loss} \quad (2)$$

If the heating body is considered isotropic ($\lambda_{thx} = \lambda_{thy} = \lambda_{thz} = \lambda_{th}$) and with an infinitely high thermal conductivity, the temperature inside the body will be homogeneous. Thus (2) is reduced to:

$$V c_v \frac{\partial \Theta}{\partial t} = P_{loss}. \quad (3)$$

When the heat generated inside the body is constant, from (3) solution, the temperature evolution with time will lead to an infinite increase of body

temperature. In reality, this will not happen as bodies do change thermal energy between each other until a thermal equilibrium is reached, $\frac{\partial \Theta}{\partial t} = 0$.

Considering the changed power between the body and the external surrounding medium, $P_{changed}$, the energy balance at the external surface of the body is:

$$V \left(c_v \frac{\partial \Theta}{\partial t} + P_{changed} \right) = P_{loss}. \quad (4)$$

If the external surrounding medium is a fluid, heat transfer inside it, is mainly due to hot portions of the fluid (in contact with the heating source) which diffuse with cold portions. This mechanism of heat flow due to fluid movements (which can be natural or forced) is denoted as convection. In the mean sense and for small amplitude variations of temperature, Newton defined the rate of heat transferred from a surface A_s of a solid to a fluid, by [4], [18]:

$$P_{con} = (\Theta - \Theta_0) h_{con} A_s \quad (5)$$

where: P_{con} - thermal power transferred by convection [W], Θ - mean temperature of fluid [$^{\circ}\text{C}$], h_{con} - mean surface convective heat transfer coefficient, excluding radiation [$\text{W m}^{-2} \text{K}^{-1}$] and A_s - body external equivalent refrigeration surface [m^2].

The determination of the mean thermal surface transfer coefficient h_{con} is rather complex; besides being itself temperature and pressure dependent, it is also function of the fluid draining regime (laminar or turbulent), fluid physical characteristics (viscosity, thermal conductivity), draining speed and geometric characteristics of the exchanging surface. For a hot solid body surrounded by a fluid, the fluid draining regime, speed or physical characteristics for all surfaces will hardly be the same, even if the surface temperature can be considered homogeneous. Solid geometric constraints, as the shape of the solid heating body, will always determine "top", "bottom" and "sided" surfaces, relatively to the overall movement of the fluid. For this reason, it is most helpful to employ point or local surface coefficients h_A , defined as:

$$\frac{\partial P_{con}}{\partial A} = (\Theta - \Theta_0) h_A. \quad (6)$$

Generally, the h_{con} value used in (5) is a mean value determined for each specific situation and assumed constant within reduced temperature ranges. Other mechanism through which the body can exchange

thermal energy with the external medium is by radiation. Any hot body emits radiant energy that can be absorbed and/or reflected by surrounding bodies at lower temperatures. While conduction and convection are functions of temperature differences, radiation is a function of the fourth power of the body absolute temperature. Stefan empirically stated the basic equation of "black body" thermal radiation that later Boltzmann derived theoretically [21]:

$$P_{rad} = k_{SB} A_s T_{ab}^4, \quad (7)$$

where: P_{rad} - thermal power transferred by radiation [W], k_{SB} - Stefan-Boltzmann constant [$W m^{-2} K^{-4}$] and T_{ab} - absolute temperature of the body [K].

Besides the temperature, also this interchange of radiant energy between two bodies is a function of their emissivity, geometry and spatial relative positions. Hottel derived an expression to estimate the power exchanged by radiation, $P_{rad1\leftrightarrow 2}$ between two surfaces A_{s1} and A_{s2} at absolute temperatures T_1 and T_2 , respectively, being $T_1 > T_2$, [17], [19], [20]:

$$\begin{aligned} P_{rad1\leftrightarrow 2} &= k_{SB} A_{s1} \mathfrak{F}_{12} (T_1^4 - T_2^4) \equiv \\ &\equiv k_{SB} A_{s2} \mathfrak{F}_{21} (T_1^4 - T_2^4), \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

where \mathfrak{F}_{12} and \mathfrak{F}_{21} are functions of the geometry, emissivity and absorption coefficients of the two surfaces. Although heat transfer mechanism models are very well defined, its application to realistic thermal systems is complex. In most cases, more than one mechanism is involved, real geometric characteristics of bodies are far from ideal ones and hard to be calculated temperature non-homogeneity and parameters dependence upon it, determine complex models with heavy analytical treatments. One of the most elementary thermal models is the homogeneous solid body with infinitive high conductivity, exchanging thermal energy with a surrounded fluid.

From (4) and (5), with $P_{changed} = P_{con}$, one obtains:

$$P_{loss} = V c_v \frac{\partial \Theta}{\partial t} + (\Theta - \Theta_0) h_{cr} A_s \quad (9)$$

where h_{cr} represents an equivalent heat transfer coefficient taking account of convection and radiation.

Assuming that only the hot body temperature, Θ , is time dependent and that initial condition is for $t=0 \Rightarrow \Theta = \Theta_0$, the resolution of (9) yields to [5], [10]:

$$\Theta(t) = \Theta_0 + \frac{P_{loss}}{h_{cr} A_s} [1 - e^{-(t/\tau)}]. \quad (10)$$

Its equivalent thermal time constant denoted by τ , is given by,

$$\tau = \frac{V c_v}{h_{cr} A_s} = \frac{c_m M}{h_{cr} A_s}, \quad (11)$$

where M [kg] is the mass of the body and c_m is the thermal capacity per unit mass, at constant pressure [$J kg^{-1} K^{-1}$].

The thermal time constant is a measure of the system thermal inertia and presents a geometric factor given by [6], [8]

$$\frac{V}{A_s} \text{ or } \frac{M}{A_s} \quad (12)$$

and a thermal factor given by

$$\frac{c_v}{h_{cr}} \text{ or } \frac{c_m}{h_{cr}}. \quad (13)$$

For a body of volume V , its thermal time constant will increase with its thermal capacity (measuring/reflecting its ability to store thermal energy) but will/decrease with its equivalent refrigerating surface A_s well as with its refrigeration efficiency (represented by the transfer coefficient h_{cr}). These last two parameters are, as referred before, very difficult to quantify in real systems. However, the thermal time constant is a very useful concept due to its physical interpretation and its quasi-invariance; variability of parameters M , c_m , c_v , h_{cr} and A_s are frequently correlated and resultant variability of τ is practically negligible. Denoting by $\Delta\Theta_f$ the body final temperature rise when the steady-state regime is reached, it is:

$$\Delta\Theta_f = \frac{P_{loss}}{h_{cr} A_s}. \quad (14)$$

Inserting (14) into (11) one obtains [5], [13]:

$$\tau = V c_v \frac{\Delta\Theta_f}{P_{loss}} = M c_m \frac{\Delta\Theta_f}{P_{loss}}, \quad (15)$$

which is a most helpful expression since it relates quantities of easy determination and, for the specific case of transformers, usually obtained from manufacturing heating tests?

The transformer thermal time constant and final temperature increments are major subjects of this work so the theme will be recovered several times along this exposition.

2.2 Transformer Simplified Thermal Model

The complexity of realistic thermal systems imposes some simplifications to obtain suitable thermal models. In this section, a simplified oil-immersed transformer thermal model will be presented. The transformer is divided into three major components: core and windings assembly, denoted by the subscript "c", oil, denoted by the subscript "o", and tank, denoted by the subscript "t". No radiators or fans are considered since, generally [25], they are not used on distribution transformers. If existing, it is possible to adjust the equivalent exchange coefficient in order to traduce their effect. Each of these components is assumed to be isotropic in all directions, with infinitely high thermal conductivity. Under this condition, no thermal gradient exists inside each component. Temperatures determined from the model can be considered as the equivalent average temperatures of each component.

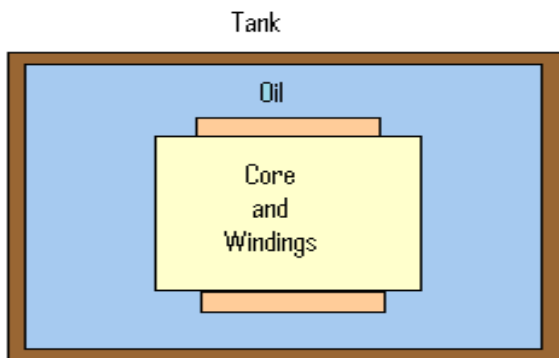


Fig. 1: Temperature distribution diagram of an oil filled transformer.

The assembly of core and windings is justified with the fact of both being solid materials (conduction is the only thermal mechanism involved) although thermal properties reflect some differences, mainly in windings made up of copper or aluminium and in magnetic sheets thermal conductivity depending on orientation (Table 1). Considering the core and windings assembly as a homogeneous body where power losses P_{loss} are generated, the energy balance at its surface, is traduced by the equation [14]:

$$P_{loss} = [Vc_v]_c \frac{\partial T_c}{\partial t} + (T_c + T_0)[h_{con}A_s]_c \quad (16)$$

Similarly, the energy balance at the tank internal surface leads to:

$$(T_c + T_0)[h_{con}A_s]_c = [Vc_v]_o \frac{\partial T_o}{\partial t} + (T_o - T_t)[h_{con}A_s]_t \quad (17)$$

and at tank external surface:

$$(T_o - T_t)[h_{con}A_s]_t = [Vc_v]_t \frac{\partial T_t}{\partial t} + (T_t - T_a)[h_{con}A_s]_t + k_{SB}A_t \mathfrak{F}_{t \leftrightarrow a} (T_t^4 - T_a^4) \quad (18)$$

where T_a denotes the absolute average temperature of the ambient air at transformer surroundings and $\mathfrak{F}_{t \leftrightarrow a}$ is a function of tank and air absorption coefficients, emissivities and tank geometry, which determination is rather complex.

Table 1: Physical values of core and winding materials at averaging operating temperatures of electrical machinery [9].

Material	Direction	Specific mass m_v [kg.m ⁻³]	Specific thermal capacity per unit mass C_m [J.kg ⁻¹ K ⁻¹]	Specific thermal capacity per unit volume $C_v = m_v C_m$ [kJ.m ⁻³ K ⁻¹]	Thermal conductivity λ_{th} [W.m ⁻¹ K ⁻¹]
Magnetic Sheets	Longitudinal				1,1
	Transversal	7 650	460	3519	27
Copper		8 900	398	3542	384
Aluminium		2 700	879	2373	204

Although the transformer has already been reduced to three major components in order to simplify its thermal model, the temperature dependence of some parameters such as thermal coefficients h_{con} and specific thermal capacities c_v , determine the use of a numerical method to solve the equation system. Some extended work about thermal coefficients and dependence with temperature of specific thermal capacities can be found on [1].

3 Thermal Models Comparative Study

In order to study the application domain and the impact of transformer thermal model improvements presented, some simulations were performed. First, each effect was analysed separately and then joined effects were considered [15], [16]. To simplify graphical notations and nomenclature the following models and respective sigma will be referred on next sections.

Reference Model, referred on graphs as "Ref", is the model proposed by International Standards [11], [12].

Resistance Model, referred on graphs as "Res", is based on Reference model but introducing the resistance correction factor $C(\Theta_{hs})$ on top-oil and hot-spot steady-state temperature rises.

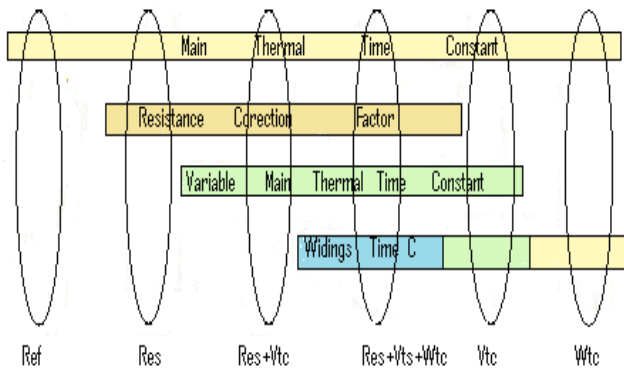


Fig. 2: Analysed aspects and models.

Variable time constant Model, referred on graphs as "Vtc", is based on Reference model where the time constant variation with top-oil temperature rises was considered.

Windings time constant Model, referred on graphs as "Wtc", is based on Reference model but where windings time constant was introduced.

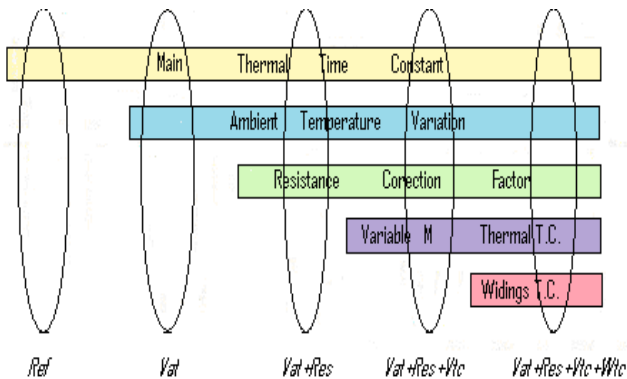


Fig. 3: Analysed aspects and models "joined" with "Vat" model.

Variable Ambient Temperature Model, referred on graphs as "Vat", is based on Reference model but considering variable ambient temperature into the transformer dynamics [27].

The following models will simulate the "joined" effects: "Res+Vtc" model takes into consideration both the resistance correction factor and variable time constant. The "Res+Vtc+Wtc" model considers the effect introduced by the windings thermal time constant, to the previous "Res+Vtc" model. Similar joined models are built, relatively to "Vat" model (Fig. 3).

3.1 Load Profiles and Transformer Parameters

The results presented were obtained considering a distribution transformer rated 630 kVA, 10 kV/400 V with copper windings [23]. When parameters used on the relevant expressions were unknown, those proposed on [12] were used:

Table 2: Transformer Specific Parameters

$\Delta\Theta_{0R} = 55K$	$\Delta\Theta_{hsR} = 23K$	$\Theta_{ref} = 75^\circ C$
$n = 0.8$	$R = 5 p.u. \text{ at } 75^\circ C$	$L = 0.05 p.u. \text{ at } 75^\circ C$
$\tau_0 = 3 \text{ hours}$	$\tau_w = 1/12 \text{ hours (i.e. 5 min)}$	$T_o = 235 K$

Except for section §3.3 ambient temperature was assumed to be constant and equal to 20°C. In order to emphasise alterations introduced by each model improvement, simulation programs use 3 normalised 24 hours load cycles represented, as general, in Figure 4. These fictitious load cycles were defined in order to cover the most of possible situations and to overstate the influence of parameters and models.

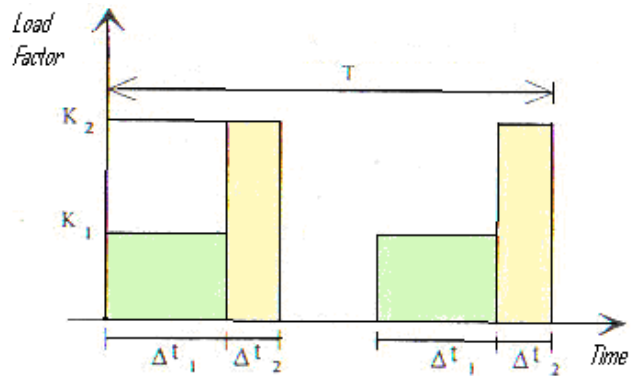


Fig. 4: General Load Cycle used in computer simulation.

Each of the three load cycles is specified as follows, according to the notation of Figure 4.

Table 3: Load Cycles Specification.

Load Cycle	$T[h]$	K_1	$\Delta t_1/T$	K_2	$\Delta t_2/T$
n°1	24	0.4	1/8	1.2	1/8
n°2	24	1.0	1/2	0	1/2
n°3	24	0.7	3/40	1.4	1/120

As initial condition of the simulations, the transformer was assumed to be disconnected from power supply and at ambient temperature (i.e. long term steady-state). For this reason, a 48 hours simulation was used. Presented graphs are then referred to last 24 hours, as the thermal transient must be practically extinguished, ($\tau_0/T=1/8$). The load cycle n°1 is a 6 hours periodic overload, with unity cyclic ratio (duty cycle); n°2 is 24 hours periodic no load - rated load, with unity cyclic ratio (duty cycle) and n°3 is 2 hours periodic impulsive overload, with 1/10 cyclic ratio. On load cycle n°2

$K_2=0$ p.u. means that the transformer is disconnected from power supply and so both load and no-load losses are null [20].

3.2 Simulated Load Profiles Under Constant Ambient Temperature

"Resistance" Model - Figure 5 represents "Ref" and "Res" models steady-state hot-spot temperature for permanent 24 hours loads and for different values of ratio L (Additional to DC Loss Ratio). Below 100°C, differences between "Res" and "Ref" models are almost imperceptible. Provided hot-spot temperatures are below 75°C, the influence of the resistance correction factor on loss of life calculations is almost insignificant. On the other hand, above 75°C, hot-spot temperature estimated by the "Resistance" model increases significantly. Neglecting resistance correction factor C is traduced to very different values of loss of life since V_{ag} is very sensitive to high values of hot-spot temperature Θ_{hs} . Moreover, the correction introduced by the resistance factor becomes more pertinent as the ratio additional / DC losses, L, decreases, since additional losses variation counteracts the DC losses increase with temperature (Fig. 5). Under a reduced L value and due to its major proportion, the overall effect is imposed by DC losses.

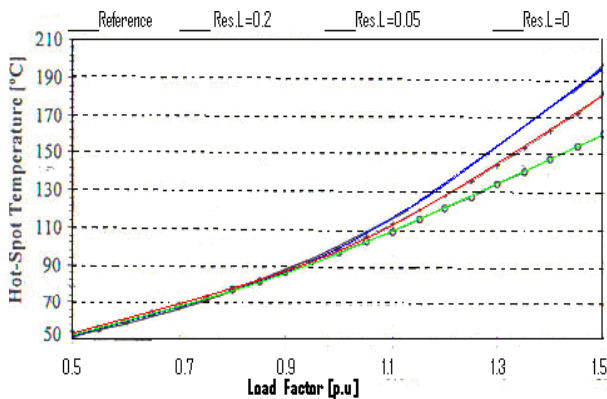


Fig. 5: Influence of resistance correction factor (steady state).

Since the C factor depends upon the unknown hot-spot temperature, its value will be estimated one calculation step behind, i.e., hot-spot temperature estimated in calculation step t will use factor C estimated in step t-1. Figure 6 represents obtained hot-spot temperatures for "Reference" and "Resistance" models, under load cycle n°1. Factor C is also represented on the same figure. As temperatures overpass 75°C, factor C becomes larger than unity, increasing differences btluwxn the hot-spot temperatures of "Reference" and "Resistance" models (i.e. Fig.6). Analytically, differences between

both models are due to estimated steady-state temperatures. Has difference is relevant mainly, for overload $K=1.2$ p.u. which is well traduced by the step variation of C factor (Fig. 6).

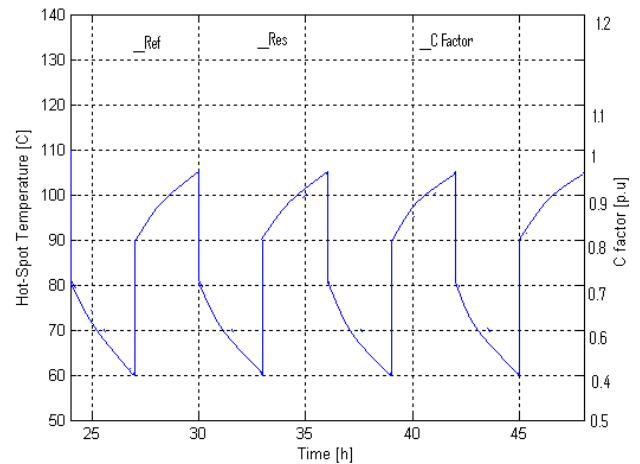


Fig. 6: Influence of resistance correction factor.

Since this C factor is not fixed within each step but readjusted for each time increment, it's increasing with heating periods, and with cooling ones, can also be observed. The C factor influence on estimated loss of life, is not directly dependent upon overload duration (as will happen with the "Windings time constant" model) but most of all, upon reached hot-spot temperatures. One can conclude that C factor should be use, every time hot-spot temperatures above 75°C are expected to be reached [23].

"Variable Time Constant" Model - To test the influence of the main thermal time constant over hot-spot temperature, load cycle n°2 was simulated and models "Reference" and "Variable time constant" were compared. Just before loading, transformer is assumed to be disconnected from power supply and at ambient temperature (20°C).

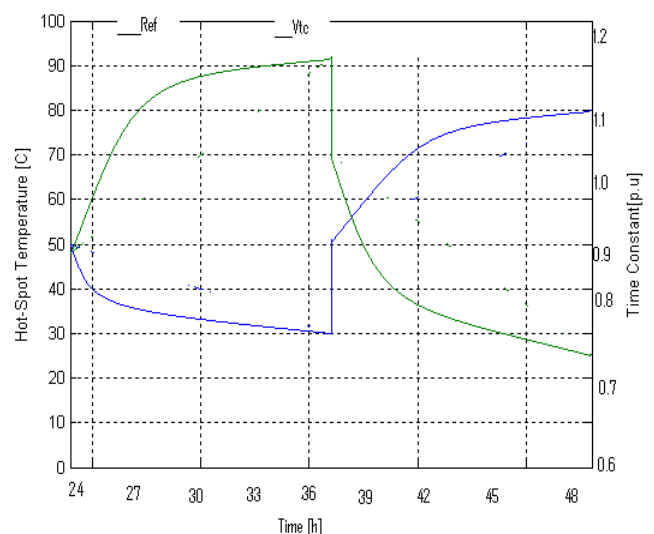


Fig. 7: Influence of variable time constant.

Figure 7 represents hot-spot temperatures and the $\tau_0(\Delta\Theta_o)/\tau_0$ function. Variation introduced by, "speeds up" heating process and as much, as severe is the overload; cooling period tends to follow the "Reference" model. The variation of transformer thermal time constant reflects the variation in the convective heat transfer coefficient with temperature differences between transformer external surface and surrounding air. As expected, its effect is as stronger as severe is the overload, since higher temperature differences are reached. Under this load cycle, final estimated τ_0 decreasing during heating period is about 20% of its rated value ($\tau_0=3$ hours); but this value increased 35% when this same load cycle was simulated with an overload of 2 p.u. (i.e., on load cycle n°2, $K_1= 2$ p.u.) and only 9% for an overload of 0.5 p.u. (i.e., on load cycle n°2, $K_1=0.5$ p.u.). Relatively to the cooling period (12 hours), the transformer thermal time constant increased about 10% of its rated value, meaning a variation amplitude, from the hottest temperature (reached at 12 hours) until the coldest (reached at 24 hours), of about 30% of its rated value.

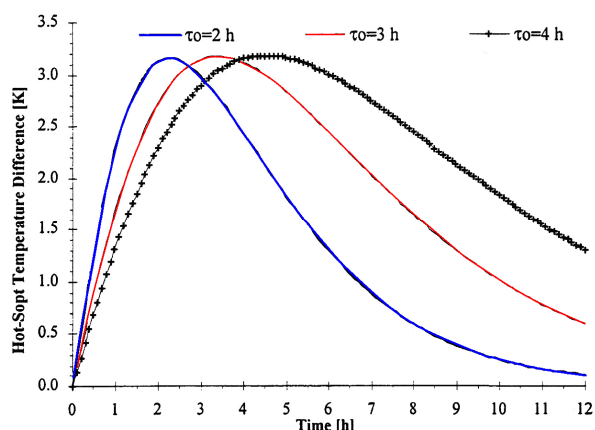


Fig. 8: Hot-spot differences between *Ref* and *Vtc* models under load cycle n°2 and for 3 different transformer main thermal time constants.

If the overload duration is much longer than the transformer main thermal time constant, the reached hot-spot temperatures simulated by "Ref" and "Vtc" models are similar. For overloads, the difference increases and is maximal when the overload duration is of magnitude as transformer main thermal time constant. Figure 8 represents differences between "Ref" and "Vtc" models simulated under load cycle n°2, considering 3 different values for the transformer main thermal time constant. While for overloads of reduced magnitude (i.e. load cycle n°3) hot-spot differences between models are imperceptible and have no impact on loss of life values, for longer

overloads, and although differences on final reached hot-spot temperature are also imperceptible, the consideration of the overall overload period, will, clearly, be reflected on loss of life. From the above simulations, it can be concluded that larger differences introduced by variation of the main thermal time constant, are verified for severe overloads with duration similar or longer than the nominal value of the main thermal time constant.

3.3. Realistic Load Profile under Variable Ambient Temperature

The previous simulation cycles explore particular aspects of each model; in order to get a global view, simulations were carried over a realistic load profile, obtained from the Romania power supply company (EDP). It is an essentially residential profile, from a neighbourhood city near Craiova and refers to the 27 December 2005, selected at random. Peak point load factor is $K \approx 1.32$ p.u. reached at 8 p.m. and minimum load factor is $K \approx 0.53$ p.u. at 7 a.m.. Available data measurements were made each half an hour. All load cycle simulations presented till now, assumed a constant ambient temperature of 20°C. For this realistic load profile, the available data did not include the correspondent "real" ambient temperature variation, but only the daily maximum ($\Theta_M = 11^\circ\text{C}$) and minimum ($\Theta_m = 5^\circ\text{C}$) temperatures. The available data included only the ambient temperature when peak load factor point was reached: about 9.6°C. Three situations were then considered [3], [19]:

i) the constant ambient temperature corresponding to the temperature arithmetic mean

$$\Theta_a(t) = \overline{\Theta_a} \quad \text{with} \quad \overline{\Theta_a} \equiv \frac{\Theta_M + \Theta_m}{2}, \quad (19)$$

ii) the daily sinusoidal variation of ambient temperature, so that 9.6°C would be reached at 8 p.m.. With t [h] and t_0 presenting a phase at origin, it will be:

$$\Theta_a(t) = \overline{\Theta_a} - \Delta\Theta_a \sin\left[\frac{2\pi}{24}(t + t_0)\right]$$

$$\text{with} \quad \Delta\Theta_a \equiv \frac{\Theta_M + \Theta_m}{2}, \quad (20)$$

iii) the weighted ambient temperature

$$\Theta_a(t) = \Theta_{aE}. \quad (21)$$

According to ambient temperature data, it must be:

$$\bar{\Theta}_a = 8^\circ\text{C}, \quad \Delta\Theta_a = 6^\circ\text{C} \quad \text{and} \quad t_0 = 2\text{h} \quad (22)$$

The sinusoidal ambient temperature, the weighted ambient temperature and the realistic load profile used in simulations are represented on Figure 9.

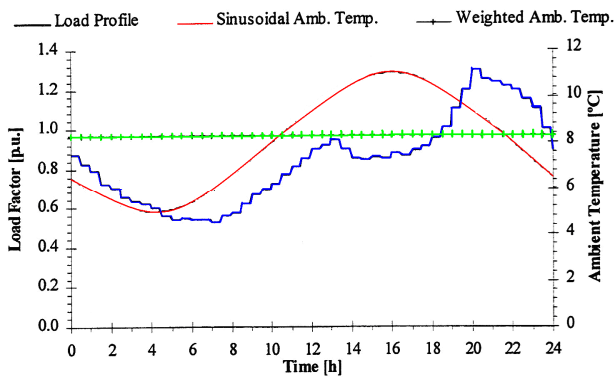


Fig. 9: Realistic load and ambient temperature profiles.

Figure 10 shows hot-spot temperatures obtained with each of the studied thermal models. To preserve figure clarity, only the peak period is represented because differences between models out of it, could hardly be distinguished. Once again, "Ref" model revealed to be the most conservative one and differences between models rise, when load factor is above 1 p.u. These results show that the correlation degree, between load and ambient temperature profiles, do have influence on reached hot-spot temperatures and, by consequence, on life expectancy results.

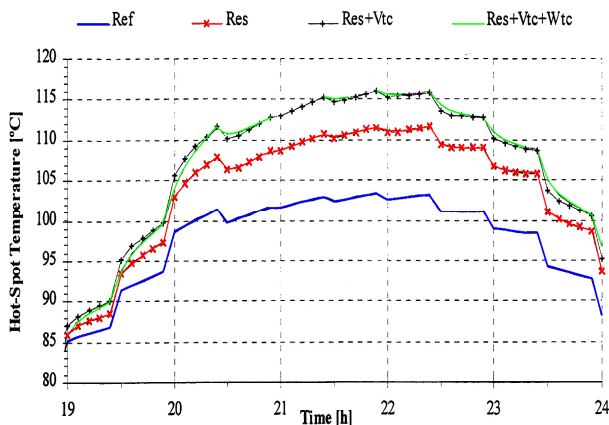


Fig. 10: Hot-spot temperature assuming sinusoidal variation of ambient temperature.

Table 4 represents the maximum hot-spot temperatures for "Ref" model and the differences between the other three models and this one, reached under the three considered ambient temperature profiles. For loss of life calculations under variable profiles, the knowledge of maximum reached hot-spot temperature is not sufficient since, being the

load profile a variable one, the all period under analysis (1 day, in this case), must be considered.

Table 4: Maximum hot-spot temperature differences between models.

Ambient Temperature	Ref [K]	Res [K]	Res+Vtc [K]	Res+Vtc+Wtc [K]
Arithmetic	103.5	+8.3	+12.5	+12.6
Sinusoidal	103.3	+8.3	+12.7	+12.7
Weighted	103.8	+8.4	+12.6	+12.7

Daily loss of life values are represented on Figure 10. The values relative to arithmetic ambient temperature are systematically below those obtained with sinusoidal and weighted ambient temperature. Attending to weighted ambient temperature definition (§2) loss of life values calculated under a sinusoidal or a weighted ambient temperature should be similar as, in fact are. This similitude, however, is erroneous; from definition, the application domain of weighted ambient temperature is restricted to constant loads, which is not the case under analysis.

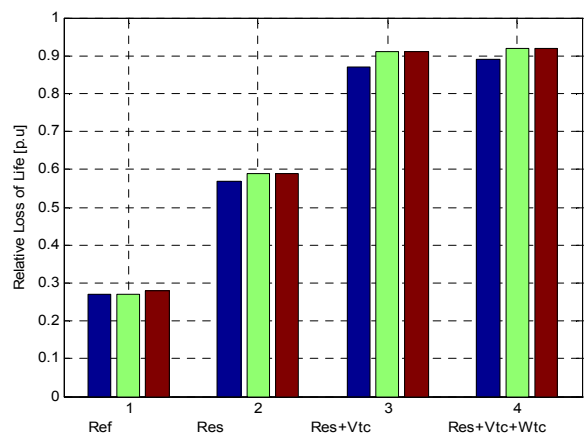


Fig. 10: Relative loss of life for a 24 hours period under reduced ambient temperature amplitude ($\Delta\Theta_a = 6\text{K}$).

3.3.1 The Weighted Ambient Temperature

Figure 11 represents the loss of life values obtained for the same realistic load profile but under a much wide ambient temperature profile, meaning a wider ambient temperature range; Figure 11 values were obtained with $\Delta\Theta_a = 16^\circ\text{C}$ and for the same arithmetic mean ($\bar{\Theta}_a = 8^\circ\text{C}$). Under this wide ambient temperature profile, differences between loss of life obtained with sinusoidal and weighted ambient temperature became visible. The reason for these differences reside on the International Standards definition of weighted ambient temperature; weighted ambient temperature do lead to the same loss of life of an equivalent sinusoidal

variation, but uniquely under constant load profiles, which is not the case of simulations represented on Figure 10 and Figure 11. To deeply analyse this fact, errors between loss of life values obtained with a sinusoidal profile and a weighted ambient temperature, as a function of ambient temperature range, were studied. Two simulation sets were performed: one considers the realistic load profile; the other assumes a constant rated load ($K=1$ p.u.). Also two arithmetic mean values for ambient temperature were assumed: $\bar{\Theta}_a=10^\circ\text{C}$ and $\bar{\Theta}_a=20^\circ\text{C}$.

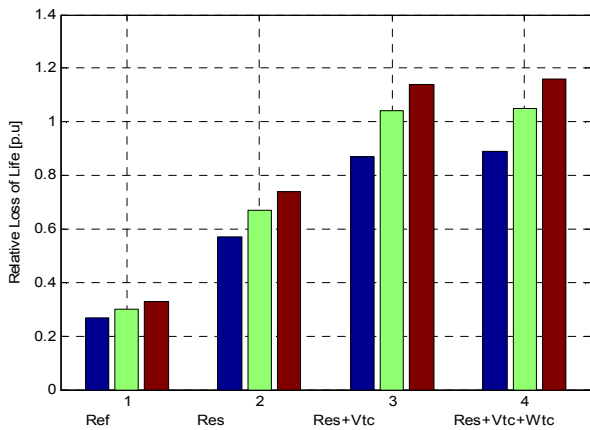


Fig. 11: Relative loss of life for a 24 hours period under wide ambient temperature amplitude ($\Delta\Theta_a=16\text{K}$).

Errors between loss of life values obtained under sinusoidal load profile and weighted ambient temperature, are plotted as a function of ambient temperature range. These ranges are in per unit values of the respective arithmetic means. Loss of life ranges are referred to loss of life obtained under constant ambient temperature ($\Theta_a(t)=\bar{\Theta}_a$). Results were obtained with the "Reference" model and are represented on Figure 12. Loss of life errors are defined as:

$$LOL_{error} = LOL_{weighted} - LOL_{sinusoidal} \quad (23)$$

From Figure 12 one concludes that the error magnitude under realistic load profile is much greater than that under constant load. Moreover, under realistic load, the error increases with ambient temperature range as well as with its arithmetic mean. The very same set of variable ambient and load profiles, leads to completely different values of loss of life, depending upon the correlation between them. Loss of life will be maximum if both load and ambient temperature peak values are reached simultaneously and minimum if load peak is reached at minimal ambient temperature.

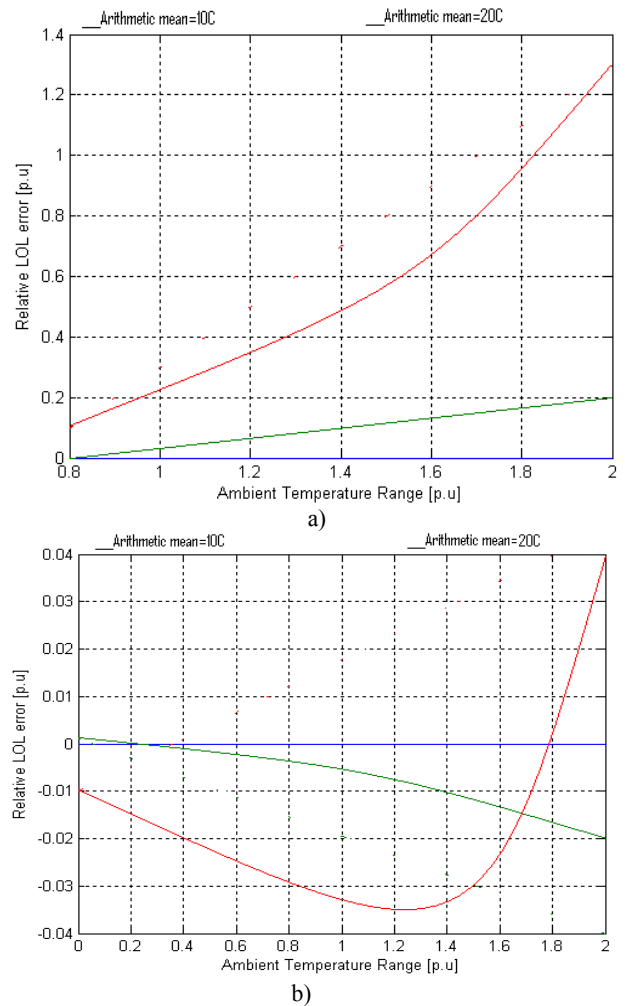


Fig. 12: Loss of Life errors between sinusoidal and weighted ambient temperature (a) under a realistic load (b) under a constant load.

3.3.2 "Variable Ambient Temperature" Model

With the previous analysed models, any change in ambient temperature will be instantaneously reflected on top-oil temperature rise and, consequently, on transformer loss of life. Figure 13 represents hot-spot temperatures for the realistic load profile, under sinusoidal, arithmetic and weighted ambient temperature profiles, simulated by the "Reference" model. It is clear the instantaneous effect of sinusoidal ambient temperature variation over top-oil temperature and consequently, relative ageing rate; sinusoidal ambient temperature becomes lower than constant ones around 10 p.m., which is instantaneously traduced by a correspondent lower hot-spot temperature. This is due to the fact that "Reference" model does not consider transformer dynamic behaviour due to ambient temperature variations. Maximum reached hot-spot temperatures are represented on Table 5 and on Figure 14, its evolution for the peak load period.

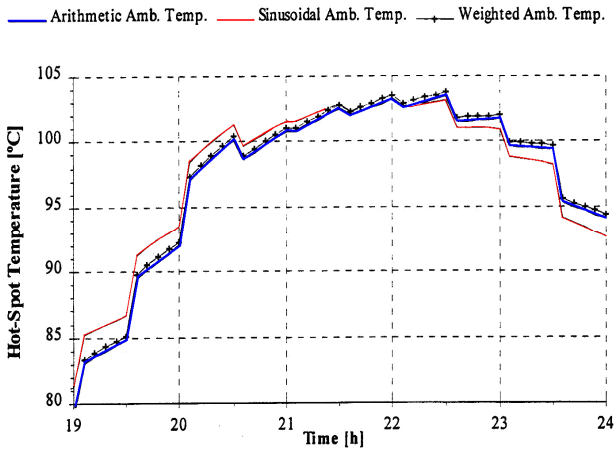


Fig. 13: Hot-Spot temperature for constant, weighted and sinusoidal ambient temperature under "Ref" model.

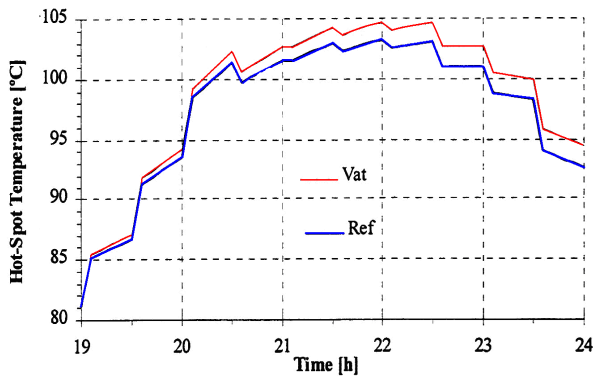


Fig. 14: Hot-spot temperatures for "Ref" and "Vat" models under sinusoidal ambient temperature.

Table 5: Maximum hot-spot temperature for "Ref" and "Vat" models.

Ambient Temperature	Ref [°C]	Vat [°C]
Sinusoidal	103.3	104.7

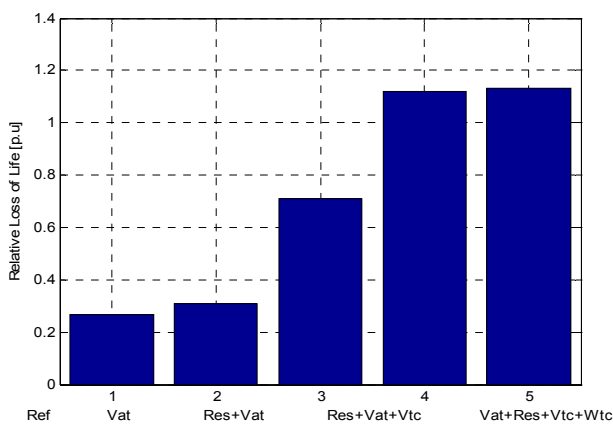


Fig. 15: Relative 24 hours period loss of life, considering "Vat" model.

Figure 15 represents daily loss of life considering "Vat" and additional models. The single effect of

ambient temperature variation leads to an increase in transformer loss of life. This is so, because transformer will react to the 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. increase in ambient temperature, with a delay associated to its thermal time constant (Figure 14). Simultaneously, the variable load is increasing, and higher hot-spot temperatures will be reached. If subsequent models "Vat+Res", "Vat+Res+Vtc" and "Vat+Res+Vtc+Wtc" are considered, loss of life will increase more than 4 times relatively to the value obtained with the "Reference" model. This loss of life increase with ambient temperature variation is expected to assume larger values, if industrial load profiles and/or unfavourable temporal correlation between load and ambient temperature profiles are considered.

4 Conclusions

This paper has shown definitive improvements on the transformer thermal model, relatively to the International Standards model. Maximal hot-spot temperatures and relative loss of life, obtained with International Standards model may be underestimated when transformer operates under larger and severe overloads and with unfavourable temporal correlation between load and ambient temperature. For severe and of very short duration overloads, neglecting windings thermal time constant can lead to overestimation of transformer loss of life, since the thermal filtering effect is not taken into consideration. For this kind of load cycles, the insulation thermal loss of life criterion will lead to different conclusions relatively to maximum windings temperature criterion would. When a realistic ambient temperature of sinusoidal profile can be assumed, the use of ambient arithmetic mean does lead to loss of life underestimation and the weighted ambient temperature can lead to important overestimation, mainly for varying load profiles under higher and of wide range ambient temperature profiles. Due to temporal correlation between loads and ambient temperature, continuously varying profiles are almost indispensable when loads or temperature ranges are wide or arithmetic it presents considerable values. From the simulations performed in this paper, it can be concluded that larger differences introduced by variation of the main thermal time constant, are verified for severe overloads with duration similar or longer than the nominal value of the main thermal time constant.

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